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February 24, 2004 LB 1049
LR 234, 236

SPEAKER BROMM: Time.

SENATOR VRTISKA: ...that Senator Cunningham is trying to get through. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. And while the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do sign LR 234 and LR 236. Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Thank you, Mr. President, members. Senator Cunningham had asked me to relate the circumstance that caused me to support this bill in the first place and...again, which I did the last time that we talked about it, and this is not going directly to the Loudon amendment. I was in a position where I had to fire someone and it was a very difficult decision and a very unpleasant experience. The employee's actions were significant enough that it was a decision that I had to come to. And the employee's response was, well, they had been considering taking some time off anyway, and really looked at it...they were...they were in a circumstance, two incomes, and really looked at it as their paid vacation time, and also said that that was...I mean, made some remarks about that was the way that she could get back at the organization for having fired her. That is not the kind of situation that I think that we should be focusing on, and that's part of the reason that I agreed to sign onto the bill. But I don't believe that there's an unlimited amount of money to provide services to individuals and to provide benefits. And so if I have to choose to provide benefits for...on the long...longer-term period, or to have the solvency, as Senator Vrtiska referenced in his remarks, a solvency of the system, then I'm going to fall down on the side of people who have been long-term unemployed rather than individuals who do something, who choose to do something, that jeopardizes their job or choose to resign their position. If I'm going to choose, and I don't think that it's a zero-sum game, so that we have to have the resources there to pay out, I'm going to choose to pay out to people who have been long-term unemployed. That's what this system was set up for. It is a safety net. It is not a paid vacation for someone. And so I believe that if we are doing something that is reasonable...now, I very much would prefer, rather than to have it automatically